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**‘Making a reality of collective responsibility’: the Lord President’s Committee, coalition
and the British state at war, 1941-42**

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Abstract

There has recently been renewed interest in the history of the British state and party politics during the Second World War. This article contributes to that, representing the first detailed analysis of a body that became a crucial part of the Whitehall war machine, the Lord President's Committee. Established in 1940, and comprised of several senior politicians, this committee had responsibility for many aspects of domestic mobilisation. Sir John Anderson, a former civil servant turned National Government MP, converted it into a powerful vehicle for the processing of data and refinement of policy. Yet, surprisingly, there has been no integration of the Lord President's Committee within the relevant historiography, and political historians have neglected its large and important archive. Charting the period where Anderson transformed the committee into an executive arm of the state, the article enhances our understanding of wartime government and cross-party co-operation.

Keywords

Second World War; British state; Churchill coalition; Conservatives; John Anderson; wartime politics.

British government and politics during the Second World War has long attracted considerable scholarly attention. Historians have recently published several new books in the field, whilst

the fascination with prime minister Winston Churchill remains enduring.¹ This reflects a powerful, and much broader, collective cultural interest in the war.² This article offers an original contribution to academic literature on the period, exploring a crucial yet seriously under-studied aspect of the machinery of the wartime state: the Lord President's Committee. Created in the autumn of 1940 to coordinate the organisation of the domestic front, and overseeing such major – and contentious – areas of public policy as production, manpower and economic controls, the committee has been described as 'the engine of government' that mobilised the nation's resources through the unglamorous and laborious, yet vital, work of bureaucracy.³ Although Churchill never sat on the committee, preferring to leave its work to others, its members included many of the senior political figures of the era. It was led at its most crucial stages by Sir John Anderson, a distinguished former civil servant and, from 1938, an ostensibly 'National', but in practice Conservative, MP.

Only on occasion was the War Cabinet forced to intervene in home affairs. For the most part, domestic administration flowed to, and from, the Lord President's Committee. Indeed it could perhaps be said that any serious history of home front government should take the work of the committee as its starting-point. Under Anderson it emerged as a 'model for reconciling different departmental interests' and functioned as a 'home Cabinet'.⁴ The Lord President's Committee was a high point of administrative innovation, becoming a vast information hub within the sprawling Whitehall machine. As the article will show, it acted as a key site of decision-making, policy analysis and power-brokering.

While some scholars have acknowledged the significance of the Lord President's Committee, investigation into its role has been cursory at best. This is as true of modern political historians,⁵ as it was of the official histories of the war.⁶ One detailed analysis of the wartime government only mentions the Lord President's Committee three times,⁷ and even a recent work on *Britain's War Machine* largely overlooked the committee that oversaw much

of that machine.⁸ Moreover, the physical records generated by the Lord President's Committee represent one of the principal underexplored archival hinterlands of twentieth-century British history. Extending across 297 files and more than ten thousand pieces of paper, the records generated by the committee chart the transformation of the state and its shifting boundaries. Importantly, they also describe – in far more detail than the War Cabinet papers – the day-to-day functioning of the coalition government between Churchill's Conservatives and the Labour party of Clement Attlee. In short, there has been no analysis of the Lord President Committee's significance that actually utilises the archive that it generated, and no integration of it into the historiography of the period.⁹

This article properly locates the work of the Lord President's Committee within the history of the British political system at war. Making use of the committee's archive, it analyses the empowerment of the Lord President's Committee under Anderson; its goals and objectives; how these were pursued; and the working relations between senior ministers – also representatives of rival political parties. Exploring those issues enables us to prise open this vital apparatus of administrative interconnectivity. Given the scale of the archive, the article is inevitably not exhaustive. Yet it does suggest that existing understandings of both wartime domestic administration and party politics should perhaps be nuanced in important ways.

The article simultaneously draws on, and is relevant to, several bodies of literature. First, it complements recent innovative work most associated with David Edgerton. Edgerton has placed emphasis on the importance of 'experts' and 'specialists' in the development of the British state.¹⁰ Men like Anderson and Ernest Bevin underlined the significance of such figures during the war, even at the highest levels of government.¹¹ As Edgerton also argues, problems of mobilisation and production were 'central to wartime politics' in a way that 'the standard party-political and welfare histories have not captured'.¹² Secondly, the article adds

to the work of political historians, filling in a notable gap in the older literature and also enabling a sharper understanding of the long-standing argument about the nature of the co-operation between the parties.¹³ It stresses the importance of Conservative leadership in domestic mobilisation. Thirdly, the article adds to perspectives, recently revived by Patrick Joyce, about the lifeblood of the modern British state – bureaucracy, memoranda, and the flow of data. Joyce has proposed thinking of the state in ‘network’ terms, in which significant ‘sites’ or ‘nodes’ should be the focus of analysis.¹⁴ Conceptualising the topic in these terms, and rooting the problem in the mundane world of paperwork and raw information, enables us to discern the webs and connections which made the Lord President’s Committee so important.

There now exist quite different scholarly interpretations of domestic administration during the war. The more conventional has been to stress the role of the Labour ministers in mobilisation.¹⁵ Edgerton’s revisionist approach, meanwhile, has complicated our view of the war economy, with a bold emphasis on science (and scientists), machinery, the standardisation of mass production, and the global nature of the war machine. The findings of this article contribute, in some respects, to both analyses. On the one hand, Edgerton is right to argue for the importance of Conservatives in governing the home front.¹⁶ Churchill did not simply cede this territory to Labour without a fight. Besides Anderson, Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Lindemann and Kingsley Wood were all important figures. As Simon Ball has demonstrated, so was Oliver Lyttelton.¹⁷ We should thus be wary of drawing arbitrary distinctions between the ‘military’ and ‘domestic’ realms, with Churchill running the former and Labour left to run the latter. Edgerton is also right to revise understandings of the war economy and what it entailed. On the other hand, older interpretations (poorly fleshed out though they were in this respect) were also right to stress the importance of the Lord President’s Committee, acting as a powerful coordinating body within Whitehall.

Accordingly, this article does not seek to substantiate either the more conventional or recent revisionist approaches. Part of the reason for this is that the existing literature, of whatever hue, has not made use of the documentary evidence under review here. When that archive is explored, fresh questions and perspectives emerge about both the state and party politics. The article thus generates findings that enrich several debates.

The article largely examines the period between 1941 and 1942. The rationale for such a focus is that this was the period when Anderson transformed the committee from being a fairly ineffective body under his predecessor, Neville Chamberlain, to the executive component of the domestic war machine. The article must necessarily foreground the role of Anderson, although he will be seen working with others – especially Bevin. Anderson remained Lord President for three years, before moving to the Treasury as Chancellor of the Exchequer in September 1943. A familiar pattern emerges here: though historians have acknowledged Anderson's importance in passing, he too has still not been properly integrated into the literature. There appears to be a parallel between the neglect of Anderson and the neglect of his committee. Neither Paul Addison nor Kevin Jefferys explored Anderson's work as a key figure in the period. Edgerton recently reiterated the role of Anderson, but did not examine it in any detail.¹⁸ Anderson left no personal papers to consult, while John Wheeler-Bennett's disappointing biography shed light little on his role at the centre of government (it was written long before source material was available).¹⁹ G.C. Peden's entry in *The Dictionary of National Biography* is one of only two useful pieces of work.²⁰ In the other, Roy Jenkins remembered Anderson as 'a public servant of unique gravitas, skill and reliability', 'the first choice for any difficult job which was going'.²¹

Anderson's authority in wartime Whitehall depended on the efficient movement of paperwork and a capacity for synthesising information. His forte was chairmanship. Lacking a charismatic personality or soaring oratory, the influence he exercised was thus rooted in the

terra firma of the modern state; yet Anderson had spent three decades in the civil service. The skills of the civil servant were those he employed as Lord President. Elected to Parliament in February 1938 as a candidate of the Scottish Unionist party, Anderson was ostensibly a ‘National’ MP but, to all intents and purposes, a Conservative in his attitudes and assumptions.²² This non-party ‘smokescreen’ was always a ‘fairly thin’ one.²³ He was ‘firmly on the other side from the Labour and Liberal parties’.²⁴ Chamberlain quickly appointed him Lord Privy Seal with responsibility for civil defence. He then became Home Secretary in September 1939. Anderson had long been regarded as one of the state’s pre-eminent administrators, and rapidly made himself ‘indispensable’.²⁵ He replaced Chamberlain as Lord President in the autumn of 1940 and set about turning the committee into a mechanism for meeting the challenges of mobilisation and resource management. Peden suggests that he ‘found himself virtually in charge’ of the home front.²⁶ There is perhaps a hint of exaggeration in this judgement, but it captures something important. Churchill described him as ‘the automatic pilot’.²⁷ To be sure, much of importance was decided *outside* the corridors of Whitehall, in industry and the trade unions.²⁸ But this article seeks to show, in greater detail, how those within the Whitehall machine were able to operate their arm of the domestic apparatus. Moreover, where Middlemas and others have explored things from the perspective of the Labour movement, this analysis – by foregrounding the work of Anderson – helps us to understand the complex processes of policy development and execution from the Conservative side.

I

This section describes the origins of the Lord President’s Committee, its remit, and its role in the coalition. The committee was created late in the summer of 1940, at the behest of Clement Attlee.²⁹ Given that the mobilisation of Britain’s resources was far from complete – indeed in many respects it had barely begun – the Labour leader lobbied for a powerful cross-

Whitehall committee to act as a co-ordinating body for resource management. For instance, he stressed to Churchill the importance of linking the Production Council with the Economic Policy, Food Policy, Home Policy, and Civil Defence Committees.³⁰ Different bodies – even where they had overlapping membership or remits – could not simply be left to their own devices, he argued. And with the War Cabinet focusing on military issues, this meant that a new executive body was required to coordinate the ‘mass of committees’.³¹ In Attlee’s words, this was the key to ‘start[ing] afresh’.³²

At the risk of employing more contemporary terminology, Attlee’s thinking reflected anxiety at a lack of ‘joined-up’ thinking in government. Churchill held similar concerns about the practices of state,³³ and thus agreed to Attlee’s suggestion: Neville Chamberlain, the former prime minister and still Conservative leader, was appointed Lord President of the Council and given the job of leading a new committee which would oversee, and connect, the different branches of government. The rapid growth in the importance of the bureaucratic machine was one of the most significant consequences of the war and had lasting effects on the British state and the horizons of party politics. The work of the committee should be placed in this context of bureaucratic innovation and self-confidence. In the short term, however, little progress was made over the autumn of 1940, most likely due to Chamberlain’s terminal illness. Whitehall committees continued to operate as independent fiefdoms with limited co-ordination. The early records of the Lord President’s Committee display a marked lack of focus and direction, and the body had no staff of its own.

This only changed when Chamberlain retired. Under his successor, Anderson, the committee began – incrementally but discernibly – to become the high-powered forum for the administration of the war effort envisaged by Attlee. Churchill clearly had faith in Anderson’s abilities, issuing explicit instructions upon his appointment as Lord President that *‘I wish you to take the lead prominently and vigorously in this committee’*.³⁴ It was ‘essential

that the larger issues of economic policy should be dealt with by [the Lord President's Committee] *and primarily by you*'.³⁵ Churchill ordered Anderson 'not to hesitate to take the initiative over the whole field. You should summon economists like Keynes to give their views to you personally...'³⁶ Indeed, historians' passing acknowledgement of the importance of the committee can perhaps be traced back to the influence of Churchill's own post-war memoirs. He recalled instructing Anderson to 'make it his particular task to grip and drive forward the plans for harnessing to our war-making machine the full economic resources of the nation. ... He soon ... shaped the Lord President's Committee into a powerful instrument for concerting departmental plans over the whole range of wartime economic policy. As time went on this committee came to exercise on behalf of the War Cabinet a large measure of authority and power of decision in this and other spheres.'³⁷

The resulting empowerment of the Lord President's Committee represents an important moment in the shifting boundaries of the modern British state;³⁸ over the following year, the committee was converted into a hub at the centre of the Whitehall network. Meeting at least once per week, and usually more frequently, this body brought together many of the key ministers of the era. Anderson remained a member throughout; Attlee, Bevin, Herbert Morrison, Hugh Dalton and Oliver Lyttelton were members for either all or part of the war. And besides the formal membership, meetings were typically attended by eight to ten other ministers. These individuals grappled with a mass of raw data and statistics. They were supported by the professional economists who staffed the Economic Section of the War Cabinet Secretariat, now given a defined role for the first time by Anderson in writing memoranda and analysing statistics for the committee. Further, the body's remit continually grew: in 1941, for instance, its duties came to include prices, wages, rationing, industry, and manpower. The following year, social services too came under the purview of the Lord President's Committee. All of these were major, difficult and controversial public policy

issues. And they were not merely administrative questions. They were *political* problems too, with potentially significant implications for the cross-party government. Prices, wages and rationing all had the potential to impact of rate of inflation or ignite serious controversy; manpower raised powerful issues of individual freedom and industrial controls.

Paperwork and information have always been crucial components in the governance of a modern state, yet they were particularly significant during the Second World War. The demands on the state and those who ran it escalated rapidly after May 1940. Government became, in the judgement of the constitutional historian Philip Norton, a ‘regulatory Leviathan’.³⁹ The resultant increase in bureaucracy was critical to the success of the war effort. Paperwork connected Whitehall with armaments factories across Britain, military forces scattered around the globe, and the economic resources of the Empire. Information flowed back and forth along a complex highway of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy expanded to such an extent during the Second World War that its mastery came to be more closely associated with the exercise of power and influence than at any previous point. To a degree, the wartime British state *was* the paperwork that it processed.⁴⁰

Bureaucracy is a way of ordering, and utilising, data. By the middle of 1940, the volume of data flowing ‘up’ this information highway to Whitehall at any one time was enormous and potentially overwhelming. It needed to be broken down, systemised, and dispersed across committees and departments if it was to be managed effectively. In overseeing this under Anderson, the Lord President’s Committee played two, complementary, roles. First, it acted as a vehicle through which information was processed, ordered, and circulated into the wider Whitehall system for further analysis. Indeed, the creation of the committee was, arguably, a means of forcibly wedging open the arteries of information and ensuring that crucial evidence did not go unnoticed in the white noise of raw data.

Secondly, the committee was a site of policy implementation. Attlee recalled that it ‘relieved the Cabinet of an immense amount of the work of civil government’.⁴¹ The fine details of policy execution were considered in a way that did not frequently occur in the War Cabinet. As a formal sub-committee of the War Cabinet, the Lord President’s Committee exercised authority over a latticework of other bodies: the Home Policy, Economic Policy, Food Policy, Civil Defence Committees were all subordinate to it, as was the Production Council. As indicated earlier, the records of the committee also offer greater detail than those of the War Cabinet. The account of the discussions – who said what, the debate, and how policies evolved as a result – is extensive. The archive is divided into the minutes of meetings, and the memoranda and discussion papers which were assessed at those meetings. The minutes typically extend over six to ten pages, and record discussion of around half a dozen issues. The minister bringing forward a discussion paper would usually set out his position, and other relevant ministers would then offer their thoughts. A mass of evidence would be brought to bear. Issues were often reserved for further analysis, and discussion resumed at a subsequent meeting; Anderson would generally work to ensure a degree of agreement across the committee. The performance of the Lord President’s Committee thus centred on the long-established, superficially unexciting practices of governance – minutes, discussion papers, memoranda, and statistical reports. It was highly repetitive. But it was the key to Whitehall’s management of the nation’s resources.

II

The rest of this article explores how the Lord President’s Committee worked in practice, and Anderson’s role at its head. It examines a number of policy areas, assessing cross-party co-operation and discord. After settling into his new role in the last weeks of 1940, by the beginning of 1941 Anderson was ready to move forward. On 17 January the Lord President informed his colleagues that he intended to strengthen the committee by improving its access

to expert advice. The Economic Section of the War Cabinet Secretariat – which had previously been poorly utilised – was henceforth to be ‘divided to form two separate bodies’.⁴² The first, composed of statisticians, would concentrate on gathering basic statistical data on Britain’s economic performance to support the Lord President’s Committee and the War Cabinet.⁴³ Anderson decided that the second body, consisting of professional economists, would work directly for the Lord President’s Committee, analysing trends and aiding ministers in devising creative solutions to the challenge of exploiting and managing Britain’s resources.⁴⁴ This was a key step in the committee becoming Whitehall’s central hub. It was confirmed two weeks later, when Anderson began a meeting of the Lord President’s Committee by relating that he had received a new instruction from Churchill that the major problems of economic mobilisation were now to be the responsibility of the committee, rather than the Production Executive.⁴⁵

In shifting responsibility for the larger issues of mobilisation from the Production Executive to the Lord President’s Committee, this indicated a desire to consider problems in the widest possible sense and link them together through a coordinating body like Anderson’s. After informing the committee of Churchill’s instruction, the Lord President and his colleagues then held a discussion over ‘what problems they should examine regularly’. The fact that the committee was essentially able to write its own remit is significant. The assembled ministers concluded that ‘price policy, wages policy, foreign trade, home consumption and compensation problems’ would fall under their collective responsibility.⁴⁶ This was a large number of complex topics; but the demands of balancing finite resources necessitated that mobilisation be analysed holistically. ‘Various points of procedure’ were also discussed: the members decided to hold regular weekly meetings, every Friday at 11.30. This would be a standing engagement.⁴⁷ It was the first step in Anderson’s committee becoming a vehicle for shaping the detail of policy. Within months, the new machinery was

producing results: from mid-1941 the records of the committee indicate much improved access to essential statistical information as a tool to support decision-making.⁴⁸ Anderson then took this further, requesting the statisticians to furnish the Lord President's Committee with a detailed monthly digest of data detailing 'trends and tendencies', as well as more exhaustive quarterly surveys to support the 'general supervision' of 'economic co-ordination'.⁴⁹ These digests would consider (i) manpower (ii) materials and (iii) industrial capacity.

If the foundational elements of the state are 'numbers' and 'words',⁵⁰ then Anderson's early leadership of the Lord President's Committee indicated a determination to use both to the fullest extent. In March, he employed the committee to drive forward a major remodelling of personnel arrangements in Whitehall as a whole. The Lord President diagnosed an acute problem confronting the British state: a shortage of administrative personnel.⁵¹ This rendered the implementation of any new schemes of controls and planning even more difficult than under ideal conditions, because there were insufficient civil servants of the appropriate grade to oversee them. Anderson's solution was to demand greater imagination from government. He proposed more 'delegation than was permissible in peace' and the 'dilution' of staff in departments – with new or junior personnel entrusted with mid-level roles – to free up experienced colleagues to work elsewhere.⁵² Anderson insisted that Whitehall operate purely on the basis of merit: 'there should be no hesitation in giving greater responsibility to promising officers, irrespective of their youth or standing'. It was a blueprint for a significant shakeup of Whitehall staffing arrangements. The Lord President's Committee approved Anderson's proposal, and he was tasked with drawing up a memorandum for circulation around the departments of state.⁵³ The resultant three-page document explained that

War inevitably produces a great increase in the volume and complexity of the business of government. In 'total war' this increase is substantially greater because of the extent to which the government is forced to assume

control over the machinery of supply, production and distribution. The Lord President's Committee have had this position under review and are concerned at the growing demand for staff to administer these new schemes of control. There is a great danger that the supply of administrative and technical staff may be so heavily taxed, and the existing administrative skills spread so thinly ... that the efficiency of our wartime economy will suffer.⁵⁴

To attempt to plug this gap by bringing in new staff from business would only deprive industry of essential leaders.⁵⁵ Therefore 'existing grades and seniority in the civil service must not be allowed to prevent rapid temporary promotion on grounds of efficiency'. Anderson asked departments to 'think carefully' about available staff when developing new schemes of controls: 'every effort should be made to introduce the utmost degree of administrative simplicity', and 'the ideal scheme' may be an 'unjustifiable extravagance'.⁵⁶ Importantly, the Lord President suggested that the government should look to industry and trade unions to run control schemes themselves wherever possible.⁵⁷

The Cabinet Secretary, Edward Bridges, held to the view that Anderson was 'the best we have'.⁵⁸ But one explanation for the overall success of the Lord President's Committee is that its members also constituted an effective team; Anderson, Attlee, Bevin, Lyttelton and Wood were natural administrators and problem-solvers, at home grappling with detail. Their styles were complementary. Anderson and Bevin, in particular, enjoyed an excellent working relationship that was central to the day-to-day operation of the committee. Bevin's biographer emphasised the importance of this relationship in passing, but, being unable to study the records of the committee, did not examine its practical application. Nor did he stress Anderson's leadership role.⁵⁹ The two men corresponded extensively with lots of short notes and had their heads together on a huge range of problems.⁶⁰ Both boasted a formidable grasp of detail. In the committee itself, Bevin would typically make a decision after in-depth study

and, during subsequent discussions, Anderson could be relied upon to ensure that he was supported.⁶¹

Indeed, the records of the committee indicate that it may be here, in terms of good working relations, that a ‘consensus’ between the major political figures of the era can be said to have developed. Attlee later remembered that the key to the committee’s success was that ‘it had about five top-ranking ministers with power to act’.⁶² This ‘made for rapid business’.⁶³ Though the body grappled with a number of deeply party-political questions – especially economic controls of all kinds – there is, perhaps surprisingly, very limited evidence of disagreement along party lines. Where there was discord, this tended to be because ministers saw problems from the perspective of their departmental fiefdoms; for the most part, pragmatism appears to have held sway.

Anderson’s role in smoothing over problems was also evident from the importance of his relationship with the Conservative maverick Lord Beaverbrook. Despite being intimately involved in mobilisation matters for much of the war – serving as Minister of Aircraft Production, Minister of Supply and Minister of War Production between 1940 and 1943 – Beaverbrook was never a member of the committee and attended its meetings very infrequently. This is surprising, given that his brief touched on much of the committee’s work and, with the exception of Bevin, no minister wrestled with these problems for so long. It is unclear exactly why Beaverbrook was not a member, but it is likely that his long-running and rancorous turf war with Bevin represents part of the explanation; the two simply could not work together and Beaverbrook was fond of resignation threats.⁶⁴ He seemed to imagine a ‘cabal’ of ministers organised against him.⁶⁵ That Beaverbrook was not a member of the committee, rather than indicating its limitations within Whitehall, arguably reinforces the importance of personal relationships inside the machine – as Attlee’s judgement of the committee’s success implies. Where these relationships were collegiate, work was processed

smoothly; where they were not, things were more difficult. ‘We all worked as a team’, Attlee stated, whereas Beaverbrook ‘was a lone wolf’ who ‘thought he could take what he wanted without consulting anybody. He was highly mistaken’.⁶⁶ As such, Anderson maintained a private, back-channel correspondence with Beaverbrook. In a series of letters addressed to ‘Dear Max’ and ‘Dear John’, the two communicated informally about resource-management and Anderson carefully kept Beaverbrook apprised of decisions taken by the committee that would affect him.⁶⁷ Beaverbrook called the Lord President his ‘one good friend’ in government, writing that ‘I ‘trust you almost above all others’.⁶⁸ Anderson’s role as an informal bridge linking Bevin’s Whitehall turf to that of Beaverbrook may well have been important.

The records of the committee thus provide fresh insights into the operation of the coalition government. Importantly, they offer plentiful examples of relatively smooth cross-party co-operation. In January 1941, for instance, Anderson and Kingsley Wood actively cultivated Labour party opinion in framing the Determination of Needs Bill, which would abolish the means test.⁶⁹ They had lobbied ‘certain government supporters’ as well, which seems likely to mean influential Conservative backbenchers.⁷⁰ The two enjoyed the ‘assistance’ of Attlee and Bevin in making these representations, with the result that the committee judged the Bill as ‘likely’ to be welcomed in Parliament.⁷¹ This was a good example of the Lord President’s Committee representing a device for implementing tricky policies in a conciliatory and uncontroversial fashion. The following month another potentially inflammatory issue, rationing and living standards, was dealt with in a similar manner. Lyttelton, as President of the Board of Trade, had warned of the ‘social maldistribution’ of consumer goods due to rising prices, with the working-classes losing out.⁷² Despite being a Conservative, Lyttelton was the most aggressive advocate of wartime controls – for instance he wanted to make any form of barter illegal⁷³ –and constantly sought

increased powers.⁷⁴ The Lord President's Committee agreed that Lyttelton should prepare a rationing programme which could be brought into effect should the situation deteriorate,⁷⁵ acknowledging the probable need to exercise 'close control' over price levels.⁷⁶ In a detailed discussion, the committee also identified the specific 'levers' which would enable the state to do this: powers over labour, raw materials, and the ability to write contracts, concluding that legislation would not be necessary in order to implement this scheme of controls.⁷⁷

This was the recipe for a significant reorganisation of the economic life of the country, but its outlines were agreed easily and without rancour. Conservative politicians had been at least as energetic in this work as Labour ministers. Moreover the exigencies of war alone do not represent a particularly satisfying explanation for this. The modest July 1940 Budget,⁷⁸ with a slight squeeze on living standards, had provoked outrage from the Labour party, while Churchill could be so relied upon to complain about anything that resembled a concession to statism that one draft memorandum was labelled 'Peptonised and Predigested for the PM'.⁷⁹ It is perhaps more likely that the Lord President's Committee, with its regular meetings and position within Whitehall, represented an effective trouble-shooting body. Churchill's absence was, from this perspective, an advantage.

Anderson subsequently took the lead in the advocacy of rationing policy. While expressing acute political anxiety that it would prove unpopular with the public, the Lord President 'saw no means of avoiding ... an extension of rationing'.⁸⁰ In April 1941 he told the committee that 'some extension' was 'inevitable' to avoid either major price inflation or shop shortages.⁸¹ As a first step, in May the Lord President's Committee submitted Lyttelton's clothes rationing scheme to the War Cabinet for approval.⁸² Churchill was resistant, but rated Lyttelton highly and grudgingly relented.⁸³ In September it was Anderson himself who oversaw the more difficult proposal for food rationing.⁸⁴ In deciding the shape of the scheme, he had overruled the Minister of Food, Lord Woolton, at the Lord President's

Committee. Woolton favoured a ‘group system’, whereby consumers would register with a particular retailer and choose from their products. Anderson, in contrast, strongly supported ‘points rationing’ – as demand and value fluctuated, the points system could be adjusted so as to achieve stabilisation; the ‘points’ (effectively, the cost) allocated to particular commodities might be modified.⁸⁵ Not being tied to a specific retailer would also give consumers greater choice and encourage competition and better service.⁸⁶ After a heated discussion, Bevin came down on Anderson’s side and points rationing was approved by the committee. The War Cabinet gave the go-ahead to his food rationing plan on 11 September.⁸⁷ As the article has suggested, Anderson’s expertise as a chairman had been integral to the effectiveness of the British state. The bureaucratic machinery of his committee held the apparatus together, organising its functions in both time and space. On all except a handful of domestic problems between 1940 and 1945, the War Cabinet essentially rubberstamped decisions which had already been taken; real responsibility lay with the Lord President’s Committee.

III

It seems worthwhile to examine an individual case study of the committee at work, analysing its records and charting the way in which a specific policy issue was managed by Anderson and his colleagues over a sustained period of time. The allocation of Britain’s human resources had been a major problem during the First World War,⁸⁸ and during the Second no issue vexed the Lord President’s Committee as acutely or for as long as that of manpower in the coal industry. The human aspects of mobilisation have been dealt with by a number of scholars;⁸⁹ but considering this from the perspective of the government’s executive domestic body sheds new light on how policy problems were tackled. This issue bedevilled the committee for almost two years and demonstrated both the authority of the body and its

limitations. As will become apparent, it was a close-run thing and, without the Lord President's Committee, the British state would perhaps have lacked the apparatus to cope.

In a nutshell, coal was vital to fuel Britain's production. But the industry was faced with a manpower deficit; there were inadequate miners to produce the necessary amount of coal. The obvious solution, to transfer personnel from elsewhere – other sectors of industry or the military – carried grave risks to production and national security. This was a challenge with no easy answer, yet Anderson and Bevin, particularly, were compelled to grapple with it at length.

The government had introduced an Essential Work Order to prevent miners from leaving their jobs for employment elsewhere, but in mid-1941 the miners' union demanded a wage increase as a quid pro quo. Given that the coal production situation was 'already serious', securing the 'full co-operation' of the workforce was deemed essential' by Wood, the Chancellor, if a 'grave crisis' was to be avoided; Lyttelton therefore approved the employers' offer of a 1-/per shift 'bonus' to be paid to each miner as a gesture of 'goodwill'.⁹⁰ Bevin signalled his backing.⁹¹ Yet within weeks it was calculated by the Board of Trade (now led by Andrew Duncan, with Lyttelton sent out to the Middle East as Minister-Resident) that with the existing workforce in the mines it would prove difficult to produce the 4.6 million tons of coal per week that were estimated as being necessary to support mobilisation.⁹² As a way out of this impasse, in July Bevin agreed that some ex-miners employed in other industries should be returned to the pits. He suggested that this would quickly – within ten to fourteen days – raise 25,000 new miners.⁹³

However, that figure proved to be wildly optimistic. The question of boosting manpower would therefore be a theme for discussion at most meetings of the Lord President's Committee for the next two years. To be sure, within days 23,714 former miners

had signalled their willingness to return to the pits;⁹⁴ the problem was actually getting them there. Securing their release from other employment was challenging. By late August 1941, only 11,528 had actually returned to the mines.⁹⁵ To make matters worse, the union rejected the ‘bonus’ offer and demanded a flat wage increase.⁹⁶ Bevin suggested utilising the Essential Work Order to extricate 5,000 additional ex-miners from their current employment; the Lord President’s Committee authorised him to investigate the practicalities and implications of doing this.⁹⁷ The members of the committee recorded at the War Cabinet their hope to boost the workforce by 30,000 within two weeks, the ideal number of employees in the mines being 720,000.⁹⁸ Bevin was given ‘full discretion’ to tackle the crisis.⁹⁹ Meanwhile Anderson supported Bevin’s argument that the government must agree to an ‘extremely awkward’ wage increase in the sector, despite the inflationary precedent it would set elsewhere.¹⁰⁰

The instrument that Bevin used was to gradually bleed manpower from other industries. The Minister of Labour opposed withdrawing men from the military and thus the miners had to come from different areas of domestic employment.¹⁰¹ By 26 September, 21,000 ex-miners were back in the pits;¹⁰² in late October the workforce reached 706,000.¹⁰³ At the end of the year, weekly production was 250,000 tons higher than the previous year.¹⁰⁴ Yet, despite this seeming success, the apparatus of state simply could not reach the declared objective of 720,000 miners. By March 1942, the number of miners had not increased for five months.¹⁰⁵ With the military side of the war increasing in intensity, official projections of Britain’s coal use were constantly rising. The latest President of the Board of Trade, Labour’s Hugh Dalton, pleaded that even ‘immediate needs’ could not be met without withdrawing former miners from the army.¹⁰⁶ The problem was becoming intractable.

Despite the efforts of the Lord President’s Committee over the second half of 1941, the crisis had thus returned. The Secretary of State for War did offer to release, on a temporary basis, ex-miners in the military if they were stationed in Britain, but refused to

withdraw personnel from active units.¹⁰⁷ He indicated that this would raise 13,000 workers, yet Dalton calculated that it would raise only 2,000 and insisted on withdrawals from military units in the field.¹⁰⁸ This was a major problem for Anderson's committee, the biggest it had faced so far. The committee was now meeting several times each week to try and come to grips with it. The Lord President demurred from Dalton's idea, on the grounds that such a drastic step as weakening active military units should not be contemplated until all other options had been exhausted; the employment of older men and youths in the mines would have to be explored.¹⁰⁹ The committee expressed its hope that the coal industry would 'put its house in order' before requesting the government to undermine Britain's armed forces: 'Of all the industries, coal-mining ha[s] been the least ready to accept the changes necessary to preserve its efficiency under war conditions'.¹¹⁰ As always, Anderson was 'immensely difficult to gainsay in a committee room'.¹¹¹

By late April, Bevin had managed to locate another 4,650 former miners from other industries and return them to the pits.¹¹² For his part Dalton was working with Bevin on the organisation of the coal industry, and with Anderson on a recruitment campaign.¹¹³ But, realistically, the British state could now go little further; there was no surplus workforce to exploit. The seriousness of this situation is clear from the fact that the matter was often passed to the War Cabinet for discussion there, sometimes being the first item on the agenda. The War Cabinet had already rejected the possibility of withdrawing men from the military and ordered the committee to find them elsewhere.¹¹⁴ It fell to Anderson to devise a strategy. His proposed solution was to simply reduce Britain's coal requirements. In May, after discussions with Churchill, he produced a memorandum which suggested reducing the demand for coal from 210m tons per annum to 206m.¹¹⁵ This was slight, but the existing workforce could be expected to generate 205m tons.

Yet this was, in effect, Churchill's approach; it is apparent from the records that Anderson did not really support his own memorandum, as in the weekly committee meeting he was 'inclined' to think that the best course, after all, was to request the War Cabinet to authorise the release of men from field units.¹¹⁶ He had been swayed to Dalton's position. However the Secretary of State for War still rejected this, and the committee was forced to study the problem further.¹¹⁷ Anderson was thus compelled to return to the policy discussed with the prime minister. Juggling the figures, over the next four days he fleshed out how coal production might be reduced: through fuel economy, the running-down of old colliery stocks, and increased work on coal outcroppings. Anderson calculated that this could reduce the demand from 206.75m tons to 202.5m tons; that might eradicate the deficit of 2.7m tons, and actually generate a surplus of 2.7m tons.¹¹⁸ The Lord President's Committee thus agreed that the War Cabinet would not again be asked to authorise the release of men from the armed forces. Yet Anderson did not get all his own way: he came down in favour of domestic fuel rationing to improve the position further and enhance the margin of safety.¹¹⁹ He argued that as the fighting intensified, the mines would be forced to release men for the military and this would reduce coal production further. Domestic fuel rationing was therefore inevitable 'sooner or later'. The Lord President was overruled by his colleagues, who did not at this stage want to take such a step and favoured further efficiencies under the existing model.¹²⁰ But when the rest of his plan was put to the War Cabinet, it was approved and Anderson was authorised to draft a White Paper on fuel efficiency.¹²¹

Bureaucratically, Anderson's strategy was an ingenious solution. It tackled the problem by circumventing it. Increasing efficiencies in fuel economy soon gave genuine grounds for optimism. In real terms, however, the policy was of limited effectiveness. By late July, coal production was falling 100,000 tons per week short of the Lord President's projections. Output per man had declined, and the existing colliery-stocks – generally poor-

quality – had yielded only 57,000 tons in two months, rather than 45,000 per week projected by Anderson.¹²² The Lord President's Committee decided to pay well-performing districts an additional bonus for increased output, in the hopes that this would incentivise performance.¹²³ But within a month Anderson told his colleagues that the fall in output had reached a crisis-stage.¹²⁴ He relayed that there was a 'continuing decline' in coal production per shift. Worse, 'all the measures which had been taken to increase the manpower of the industry had been neutralised by this continuing decline in the productivity of the labour force'; this was 'the root cause' of the crisis and it was 'clear' that production could not be improved until the causes of the decline were addressed. Increasing the workforce was thus 'only a palliative' and ignored the 'fundamental' problem at hand.¹²⁵

Coal production had challenged the capacity of the Lord President's Committee to deal with the problems of resource-allocation. It had stimulated disagreement among ministers. But it is striking that where there had been discord, positions were clearly informed by departmental perspectives, not party affiliation. For instance, when the Minister for Fuel and Power identified absenteeism rather than organisation as being Anderson's 'root cause', with miners feeling a 'lack of ... enthusiasm', Bevin backed him.¹²⁶ The committee came down in favour of taking the 'exceptional step' of publicly releasing information about the crisis in output (despite the intelligence this would provide to the Axis governments) as part of a 'vigorous' campaign of publicity aimed at mineworkers.¹²⁷ Churchill was asked to make a personal appeal to miners in the form of a speech.¹²⁸ Anderson did his best to silence Lloyd George's demands for military manpower, arguing that the only realistic response was for the existing workforce to extract more fuel per shift.¹²⁹

The problem of mining sufficient coal was never satisfactorily resolved. Though efficiencies in the use of coal, gas and electricity overseen by Anderson meant that the fuel production situation in 1943 was 'balanced' after all,¹³⁰ by the autumn projected military

operations for 1944 were posing a renewed challenge.¹³¹ Yet though no ideal solution was found, and as such there must be a degree of ambiguity in the conclusions that we draw, the example of coal production provides valuable insights into the role and significance of the Lord President's Committee. By connecting key ministers in an information hub, the British state was able to get the maximum out of its available manpower and – in inevitably imperfect conditions – muddle through. Given that there were simply not enough people to fill every projected post in all areas of the war effort, some shortfall was perhaps inevitable; what mattered was how the state coped with that fact. In a telling remark, Anderson said that 'My committee is intended to be a forum, not an arena'.¹³² Without the co-ordination offered by the Lord President's Committee, a *genuine* and debilitating crisis of production (as opposed to a largely *political* one) might have emerged in mid-1942.¹³³ Detailed analysis of the records thus permits us to endorse Hancock and Gowing's view that while Bevin wielded the formal powers over the workforce, it fell to Anderson to 'reconcil[e] conflicting views at the highest level'.¹³⁴ The axis between these two 'experts' was integral to the mobilisation of the British state.

IV

During the Second World War, Whitehall was more connected than ever before; but it was also connected to things which were also more dispersed than at any previous point, both geographically and intellectually. This posed problems for effective government and the exercise of the state's core functions. The Lord President's Committee was an institutional response to these dilemmas, a way of bringing knowledge and expertise to bear. Hugh Dalton described its meetings as 'awfully slow',¹³⁵ but they were also detailed and deliberate, and solutions were sometimes imaginative.

This article, inevitably, is not comprehensive and underlines the need for further research in an important yet neglected archive. A larger study might examine the work of the committee during the entire war, pursuing its instructions into individual Whitehall departments and shedding light on how far policy was mediated by the different levels of the state apparatus. Yet we can safely draw some provisional conclusions. Previous neglect of the Lord President's Committee is a significant omission from the literature on both government and party politics. Its existence boosted the contributions of a number of individuals, most obviously Anderson but also Attlee, Lyttelton and the economists in the Economic Section. Analysis of its records offers fresh perspectives on a range of issues, from domestic administration to cross-party cooperation between senior politicians. For example, whereas most historians have emphasised the role of Bevin in the organisation of the war economy, Edgerton recently argued that Anderson was 'almost certainly more significant than Bevin in production matters'.¹³⁶ In fact the records themselves are slightly more ambiguous. While Anderson steered the committee as a whole, it is also clear that he almost always supported Bevin's favoured policies. Rather than trying to establish which of these organisational 'tsars' was the more important, then, we should perhaps see Anderson and Bevin as constituting a powerful team. The location of the committee at the top of the Whitehall system, with other bodies sitting beneath it, provided a means of establishing effective oversight of the war machine. Raw data flowed up and down this highway; the organisation created by Anderson was a way of systemising it, rendering it manageable, and imposing a degree of leadership over it. Between 1941 and 1942, the Lord President's Committee – and especially its chairman – had employed that machinery to help coordinate Britain's domestic apparatus.

The committee's work, and the collaborative relationships that drove it, appear to support Middlemas's notion of the development of a system in which 'a consensual view of the national interest' tended to hold sway in a web of wider connections linking ministers,

businesses, trade unions, political parties and state bureaucracy.¹³⁷ (In this period, particularly, ‘consensus’ is a loaded term; the ‘consensus’ revealed in the Lord President’s Committee is perhaps a more limited one than that of Paul Addison’s *The Road to 1945*, marked by the fruitful working relationships of senior politicians sharing a series of managerial challenges.) Though Middlemas’s is an older, more ‘conventional’ interpretation, it may also be that in some respects these can – and should – be reconciled with more recent ‘revisionist’ versions. Despite Edgerton’s justifiable emphasis on expanding our definition of the war machine, Middlemas equally stressed the need for a sense of the wider picture.¹³⁸ Moreover, while older political historians arguably had a narrow view of the war economy – with an over-emphasis on Bevin and Whitehall – nevertheless they were right in their instinct that the Lord President’s Committee was a crucial part of the apparatus. The conclusions reached by historians are always shaped by where they choose to look, so it may be that with regards to these debates a degree of reconciliation is in order.

It was perhaps with his experiences as Lord President in mind that Anderson was invited to deliver the Romanes lecture in 1946. In an address entitled ‘The Machinery of Government’, Anderson reflected at length on the advantages offered by the kind of structures that he himself had established and presided over. In an important description, he discerned in Cabinet committees modelled on the Lord President’s Committee the means to ‘*make a reality of collective responsibility*’ among ministers. The system ensured that ‘the policies of different departments are consistent with each other and *form one coherent whole*’.¹³⁹

Scrutinising Anderson’s leadership of the committee enables us to grasp why Churchill placed such faith in him. The prime minister kept Anderson, above all other ministers, informed of the progress of the top-secret ‘Tube Alloys’ project (the atomic bomb),¹⁴⁰ and advised the king that if he and Eden should die before the end of the war,

Anderson – ‘the automatic pilot’ – ought to be his successor.¹⁴¹ Interestingly, the Lord President appears to have been friendly with Alan Brooke, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and himself an astute administrator. The two were both denizens of clubland; they occasionally had lunch at the Athenaeum; and Brooke entertained Anderson at home.¹⁴² For Churchill, Anderson may have fulfilled a domestic role analogous to that of Brooke in the realm of strategy: temperamentally Anderson and Brooke were cut from the same cloth, and had similar skills. The prime minister never personally warmed to either but relied on them immensely. Brooke (who generally thought little of politicians) admired the Lord President as ‘one of the best in Cabinet’.¹⁴³

The work of Anderson also underlines that Conservatives were integral to the expansion of the British state that occurred under the pressures of war. Because the modified boundaries of government were doctrinally more amenable to the Labour party than the Conservatives – and Labour ministers played a key role in bringing this about – there has been a tendency to downplay the centrality of Conservative politicians to the remaking of the state. As Edgerton and Ball have suggested, this should be reassessed. Besides Anderson himself, no politician did more to devise the apparatus of controls than Lyttelton. Meanwhile Beaverbrook and Wood were similarly important figures. For all the policy innovation of Attlee, Bevin and Morrison it was, arguably, Conservative ministers who actually legitimised the changing scope and mindset of British government; their eager involvement largely extracted partisan politics from the equation and left the solutions being implemented resembling little more than common sense. To be sure, wartime Whitehall would have been compelled to engage in ‘planning’ whatever the politics or personnel. But, under Anderson’s leadership of the Lord President’s Committee, planning was made more efficient than had previously been thought likely; the flow of raw data available to policymakers was greatly improved; and departments were under standing orders to act holistically. The possibilities of

new kinds of state action – bureaucratically under Anderson, in terms of controls under Lyttelton, and financially under Wood – had largely been established by Conservative ministers.

So how far did Anderson govern according to recognisably ‘conservative’ principles? Or was his statecraft purely pragmatic? The assumptions of the Lord President appear to have been that policy problems were there to be solved in the most effective manner, without regard to political point-scoring or ideological fidelity. This probably reflected his background as a civil servant. It does not mean that Anderson was not a Conservative – in 1941 he reassured Conservative backbench opinion that he would not tolerate any attempts to implement ‘nationalisation by stealth’,¹⁴⁴ the following year he was sceptical about what he considered to be a premature expansion of the welfare state,¹⁴⁵ and in 1944 he insisted that the government commit to pursuing a ‘high and stable level of employment’ in the post-war period rather than ‘full employment’ as desired by Labour.¹⁴⁶ Roy Jenkins identified a ‘slight falseness’ to Anderson’s non-partisan image, and even judged that it was a ‘smokescreen’.¹⁴⁷ Nor did Lyttelton, Wood and others abandon their own conservatism. For the most part, though, we can see that even more consciously ‘political’ Conservatives struggled to relate their principles to the demands of war. On the other hand, if an important aspect of the conservative cosmology is to emphasise *practice*,¹⁴⁸ then the work of Anderson and others may underline the resiliency – and continued relevance – of that mentality in an environment of extreme instability. Planning the management of finite national resources was something that those of all political complexions could rally around. In this respect the Lord President’s Committee reminds us of the extent to which the Churchill coalition was essentially a problem-solving exercise – and, for the most part, how well it performed in that task. Inside the committee, traditional political dividing lines between parties and ideas were seldom in evidence. This is not to overlook the fact that Britain’s leading politicians came to develop

increasingly divergent visions of the future. Yet it does indicate that, at the top, and in terms of what the coalition was formed to do, there was indeed something of a ‘consensus’ – if only in a shared attitude and willingness to innovate.

This article has made a number of points. It has argued that exploring the archive of the Lord President’s Committee, rather than confirming conventional or revisionist approaches to the wartime state, suggests that both have considerable merit but also that we need to ask fresh questions in light of these sources. In addition, it has suggested that the committee enriches our understanding of party politics and cooperation. This perhaps leaves us with a more rounded, nuanced impression of British politics during the Second World War: enduring division outside Westminster and cut-throat competition within it,¹⁴⁹ but also deep co-operation inside the Whitehall machine. If we are to fully appreciate the richness of British public life at this point, there may be a need to read the evidence through several different lenses. The many possible narratives of the period are by no means incompatible.

Notes

¹ Most recently, Toye, *Roar of the Lion*. See also Crowcroft, *Attlee’s War*; Edgerton, *Britain’s War Machine*; and Thorpe, *Parties at War*. For the popular fascination with Churchill, see Hastings, *Finest Years* and the BBC radio drama *Sea Change* (2013). This was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 in January 2012.

² Argued recently in Noakes and Pattinson (eds.), *British Cultural Memory*, and Stewart, *Second World War in Contemporary British Fiction*.

³ Harris, *Attlee*, 180.

⁴ Lee, *The Churchill Coalition*, 84, 100.

⁵ The two standard works on wartime politics scarcely mention the committee. See Addison, *The Road to 1945* and Jefferys, *The Churchill Coalition*.

⁶ For instance, Hancock and Gowing, *British War Economy*, and Parker, *Manpower*.

⁷ Lee, *The Churchill Coalition*, 189.

⁸ Edgerton, *Britain’s War Machine*.

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- ⁹ Chester, *Lessons of the British War Economy*, did underline the importance of the committee, but did not investigate the actual records.
- ¹⁰ Edgerton, *Warfare State*, chapter four.
- ¹¹ Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, 95-99.
- ¹² Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, 3-9.
- ¹³ See Addison, *The Road to 1945* and Jefferys, *The Churchill Coalition and Wartime Politics* for the most important statements.
- ¹⁴ Joyce, *The State of Freedom*, 19.
- ¹⁵ Most obviously, Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*.
- ¹⁶ Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, pp. 98-9.
- ¹⁷ Ball, *The Guardsmen*, chapter six.
- ¹⁸ Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, p. 99.
- ¹⁹ Wheeler-Bennett, *John Anderson, Viscount Waverley*.
- ²⁰ Peden, 'John Anderson'.
- ²¹ Jenkins, *The Chancellors*, 401. Other observations on Anderson are offered in Hennessy, *Whitehall*, 559-65.
- ²² Anderson was invited by the Scottish Unionists – the Conservatives north of the border – to stand for one of the University seats, and accepted after it was agreed that he could avoid any party labels.
- ²³ Jenkins, *The Chancellors*, 412-3.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ See Hennessy, *Whitehall*, 559-65. He has been described as 'the apostle of orderly administration' – Howard Kent, *In on the Act* (London, 1979), 232.
- ²⁶ Peden, 'John Anderson'.
- ²⁷ Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, 40.
- ²⁸ Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society*, chapter ten.
- ²⁹ CAB 67, WP (G) 275, 24 May 1940, and CAB 65/5, WM (40) 64, 19 June 1940. The government papers examined in this article are held at the National Archives in Kew.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, 40.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ See Hamilton, 'The decline of Churchill's 'Garden Suburb''.
- ³⁴ Churchill to Anderson, 28 January 1941, memorandum cited Churchill, *The Second World War, Volume III*, 102 (emphasis added).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Churchill, *The Second World War, Volume III*, 102-3.

³⁸ On this theme, the best panoramic work remains Whiting and Green (eds.), *The Boundaries of the State in Modern Britain*. See also Harling, *The Modern British State*.

³⁹ Norton, 'Winning the war but losing the peace', 34.

⁴⁰ On the power of record-keeping and paperwork, see Agar, *The Government Machine*.

⁴¹ Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, 40.

⁴² CAB 71/2, LP (41) 1, 17 January 1941.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid. See also CAB 71/3, memorandum by The Lord President of the Council, 5 February 1941.

⁴⁵ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 2, 31 January 1941.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ For instance, CAB 71/2, LP (41), 25, 20 June 1941. The records of this meeting show analysis of detailed data relating to the fact that timber stocks were falling; food stocks were much higher than in 1940; feeding-stuff stocks were low; there was now very little difficulty in obtaining adequate iron and steel; and petrol stocks were depleted.

⁴⁹ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 31, 18 July 1941.

⁵⁰ Joyce, *The State of Freedom*, 146.

⁵¹ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 8, 7 March 1941.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 9, 14 March 1941.

⁵⁴ House of Lords, Lord Beaverbrook papers, BBK/D/347, 'Schemes of government control: shortage of administrative personnel. Memorandum by the Lord President of the Council', 19 March 1941.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Churchill College, Cambridge, Sir John Colville papers, diary, 28 July 1940.

⁵⁹ Bullock, *Ernest Bevin, volume two*, 110-11.

⁶⁰ These records can be found in CAB 118/21.

⁶¹ For instance, CAB 71/6, LP (42), 7, 23 January 1942.

⁶² Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, 40.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Beaverbrook wanted to amalgamate the Ministries of Labour and Production – Beaverbrook papers, BBK/D/425, draft resignation note to the prime minister (n.d., but late 1941).

⁶⁵ Churchill College, Cambridge, Winston S. Churchill papers, 20/20, Churchill to Beaverbrook, 30 October 1941.

⁶⁶ Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, 40-1.

⁶⁷ These are contained in Beaverbrook papers, BBK/D/425.

⁶⁸ Beaverbrook papers, BBK/D/425, Beaverbrook to Anderson, 20 September 1941.

⁶⁹ CAB 71/2, LP (41) 1, 17 January 1941.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² CAB 71/2, LP (41), 3, 7 February 1941.

⁷³ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 15, 25 April 1941.

⁷⁴ See Ball, *The Guardsmen*, chapter six.

⁷⁵ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 3, 7 February 1941.

⁷⁶ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 5, 18 February 1941

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ For instance, H.C. Debs., 23 July 1940, cols. 637-57.

⁷⁹ See, for example, PREM 5/18/7, Churchill to Wood, 19 February 1941 and T171/356, 'Budget Policy Peptonised and Predigested for the PM', 25 February 1941.

⁸⁰ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 11, 28 March 1941. See also CAB 71/4, memorandum by The Lord President of the Council, 25 March 1941.

⁸¹ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 13, 4 April 1941.

⁸² CAB 71/2 (41), 19, 13 May 1941; CAB 66, WP (41) 105, 'Rationing of Clothing: Memorandum by the President of the Board of Trade', 20 May 1941.

⁸³ Chandos, *The Memoirs of Lord Chandos*, 204-5; Churchill, *The Second World War, Volume III*, 312.

⁸⁴ CAB 66, WP (41), 216, 'Extension of Food Rationing: Memorandum by the Lord President of the Council', 9 September 1941.

⁸⁵ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 40, 29 August 1941.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ CAB 65, WM (41), 92, 11 September 1941.

⁸⁸ See Grieves, *The Politics of Manpower*, and a recurrent theme in Turner, *British Politics and the Great War*.

⁸⁹ For instance Gowing, 'The organisation of manpower', 147-167.

⁹⁰ CAB 71/2 (41), 22, 30 May 1941.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² CAB 71/2 LP (41), 30, 11 July 1941.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ CAB 71/2 LP (41), 33, 25 July 1941.

⁹⁵ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 39, 26 August 1941.

⁹⁶ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 35, 8 August 1941.

⁹⁷ Ibid; CAB 71/2, LP (41), 42, 12 September 1941.

⁹⁸ CAB 65, WM (41), 94, 18 September 1941.

⁹⁹ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 42, 12 September 1941.

¹⁰⁰ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 35, 8 August 1941.

¹⁰¹ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 42, 12 September 1941.

¹⁰² CAB 71/2, LP (41), 45, 26 September 1941.

¹⁰³ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 50, 24 October 1941.

¹⁰⁴ CAB 71/2, LP (41), 61, 24 December 1941.

¹⁰⁵ CAB 71/6, LP (42), 17, 9 March 1942.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ CAB 71/6, LP (42), 18, 13 March 1942.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Hennessy, *Whitehall*, 559.

¹¹² CAB 71/6, LP (42), 27, 30 April 1942.

¹¹³ British Library of Political and Economic Science, London, Hugh Dalton papers, diary, 12 March 1942.

¹¹⁴ CAB 65, WM (42), 46, 10 April 1942.

¹¹⁵ CAB 71/9 LP (42), memorandum by the Lord President of the Council, 20 May 1942.

¹¹⁶ CAB 71/6, LP (42), 30, 22 May 1942:

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ CAB 71/6, LP (42), 31, 26 May 1942.

¹¹⁹ CAB 71/6, LP (42), 33, 28 May 1942.

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- ¹²⁰ CAB 71/6, LP (42), 33, 28 May 1942.
- ¹²¹ CAB 65, WM (42), 69, 29 May 1942.
- ¹²² CAB 71/7, LP (42), 45, 31 July 1942.
- ¹²³ CAB 71/7, LP (42), 49, 21 August 1942.
- ¹²⁴ CAB 71/10 LP (42), memorandum by the Lord President of the Council, 17 September 1942.
- ¹²⁵ CAB 71/7, LP (42), 55, 18 September 1942.
- ¹²⁶ CAB 71/10 LP (42), memorandum by the Minister of Fuel and Power, 23 September 1942; CAB 71/7, LP (42), 57, 25 September 1942.
- ¹²⁷ CAB 71/7, LP (42), 55, 18 September 1942.
- ¹²⁸ CAB 71/7, LP (42), 57, 25 September 1942.
- ¹²⁹ Ibid.
- ¹³⁰ Ibid; CAB 71/11, LP (43), 8, 29 January 1943.
- ¹³¹ CAB 71/11, LP (43), 55, 20 August 1943.
- ¹³² Dalton papers, diary, 12 March 1942.
- ¹³³ On the political crisis of production – arguably really a challenge to Churchill’s leadership – see Addison, *The Road to 1945*, chapter seven. Consult too the important new insights offered in Edgerton, *Britain’s War Machine*, chapter five.
- ¹³⁴ Hancock and Gowing, *British War Economy*, 295.
- ¹³⁵ Dalton papers, diary, 26 February 1942.
- ¹³⁶ Edgerton, *Warfare State*, 99.
- ¹³⁷ Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society*, chapter thirteen.
- ¹³⁸ Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society*, 373.
- ¹³⁹ Anderson, *The Machinery of Government*, 13-18, 31-33 (emphasis added).
- ¹⁴⁰ For instance, Churchill papers, CHAR 20/127, Naval Cypher: Prime Minister to Lord President, 23 January 1943; CHAR 20/128, Cypher Telegram: ‘Britman Washington’ (Churchill) to Lord President, 26 May 1943.
- ¹⁴¹ Churchill papers, CHAR 20/193 A, Churchill to King George VI, 28 January 1945.
- ¹⁴² For instance, Danchev and Todman (eds.), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, 9 September 1940, 106, and 16 September 1942, 322.
- ¹⁴³ *Alanbrooke diaries*, 12 November 1942, 341.
- ¹⁴⁴ Durham County Record Office, Cuthbert Headlam papers, diary, 16 December 1941.
- ¹⁴⁵ ED 136/229, note by Butler, 14 September 1942.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Employment Policy*, Cmd. 6527 (1944).

¹⁴⁷ Jenkins, *The Chancellors*, 413, 462.

¹⁴⁸ Aughey and Norton, *Conservatives and Conservatism*, chapter one; Oakeshott, 'On being conservative', 407-37.

¹⁴⁹ Crowcroft, *Attlee's War*, and Thorpe, *Parties at War*.

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